

Andrew Jackson to James Winchester, November 22, 1814, from Correspondence of Andrew Jackson. Edited by John Spencer Bassett.

TO BRIGADIER-GENERAL JAMES WINCHESTER.¹

¹ N. Y. Hist. Soc.

Head Quarters 7 M Dist Mobile, November 22, 1814.

Sir: I have waited with great solicitude your arrival. I was in hopes from the tenor of your letter of the 20th ultimo that, I should have had the pleasure, of seeing you previous to my departure for New Orleans, and I can but regret my disappointment in this expectation, as I could verbally have given you, a more extensive idea of this section of the country, and more particularly have drawn your attention to its weak points, than I shall be enabled to communicate by a letter of instructions.

The enemy having been driven from Pensacola, they may be induced to abandon it, as a place of deposit and, concentration for their troops, betake themselves to Appalachicola, and from thence attempt to penetrate the country by the creek territory, take Fort Jackson, and cut off our supplies from that Quarter.

This you must guard against with vigilance, keeping up frequent communication with Colo. Hawkins the Agent of Indian Affairs, from whom you may derive much information. To guard against an incursion by way of the creek country, I have ordered Majr. Blue of the 39 Infty with the detachment spoken of in my letter to you of the 18th Inst. from Judge Tolmin, to scour the Escambia [and] Yellow Water, and if his supplies would Justify him to strike the Seminolies in their towns and destroy their crops. I have also ordered Colo Hawkins at the head of the creek warriors, and such auxillary force as the Governor of Georgia might

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furnish for the purpose, to attack the Seminolies and hostile creeks from thence. Aded to this I have instructed Major Genl. McIntosh,² who commands the Georgia troops, on their way to this place, if he found upon enquiry of Colo Hawkins, that his warriors and those troops furnished by the Gouvenor of Georgia were not adequate to the accomplishment of the object intended to march with the whole, of his command, or, detach such number as he might concieve competent, for the purpose. And immediately after effecting it to repair to this place. I have ordered the Brigade from East Tennessee commanded by Genl. Coulter to march directly to Fort Montgomery.

2 John McIntosh.

You will find stationed at Forts Montgomery and Claibourn Genl. Taylors Brigade, about two thousand strong, Colo. Pipkins Regiment,³ and about three hundred of the Madison and Mississippi Teritorial militia here and at Fort Bowyer. The Second and third Regts of U. S. Infantry, with four companies of the 24 and one of the 39th, which will give you an effective force, exclusive of the Indians (all of whom you are authorized with the frontier Regt. of the Territory, to call into service) of four thousand one hundred and fifty. Add to this the twenty five hundred on their march from Georgia, and two thousand from East Tennessee, and you will have an effective force of at least eight thousand, which I trust will be competent for the complete protection and security of this section of the district, and to afford me a reinforcement if required. The Indians must be stimulated and kept in the field. To give you the ideas of the Secretary of war on this head I enclose you a copy of a letter received from that department of the [*blank*].

3 First Regt. Tennessee militia.

The General Order of the 19th Instant predicated on an order from the War department of the 19 ultimo relating to the repairs, and safe keeping of arms, will claim your attention. The scarcity of arms in the district, demands the utmost expedition in the organization of a corps of Artificers for their repair. Before I close this communication, I must bring to your

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view the original plans of the enemy for penetrating this country, as far as I have been enabled from various sources to collect them. They first intended to have carried Forts Bowyer and Charlotte, ascended the Rivers Mobile, Tombigby and Alabama, aroused the Indians to war, drawn them to their standard passed across the territory to the Mississippi, produced an insurrection of the negroes, cut off from supplies from the upper country, and thus compell the lower country to surrender at discretion.

The attempt agreeably to the original plan of operations, was made upon Fort Bowyer where the enemy were nobly repulsed. But they may again renew their attack upon an augmentation of their forces. Every exertion must be used to strengthen and support this important point which forms the Key of communication between this and New Orleans from whence the supplies must necessarily be drawn. I again repeat this point must be maintained. The Gun vessels on the station may be expected to cooperate with you for that purpose. I have ordered considerable alterations to be made in the Fortification of the point agreeably to a plan submitted by captain Chamberlain,⁴ under the direction of that officer, which will claim your first attention. I have added to the Fort since the attack of the enemy Guns of a large, caliber, and I feel a conviction when the alterations proposed are completed that ten thousand troops cannot take it. The enemy may attempt a landing at Pascagola, and from thence to penetrate the country in that direction, and by that means cut off our supplies from New Orleans. But I flatter myself that our Gun Boats on the Lakes will be enabled to keep open the communication. Should the enemy effect a landing he will be without transportation, can and must be cut off before he penetrates the country far. I have the principal part of the troops encamped at Fort Montgomery, as the most eligible point to cover Mobile, check the enemy from Pensacola, and afford relief to Fort Bowyer if invested by land. But as the reinforcements arrive you will use your discretion in posting them in the best positions to give security to the country committed to your care. You will endeavour at all times to gain the earliest information of the movements of the enemy, to enable you to Judge of his intentions, and thus to guard against feints which he may make to mask his real designs. The 2nd and 3d Regts. of Inftry. are equal to any troops in the

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world, and their officers not inferior to any. They may be relied on for the execution of any order within the reach of possibility. For them the post of honor is the post of danger. The militia are fine material, but not well officered. I have appointed Captn William O. Winston Assistant Adjutant Genl. and ordered him to report to you.

4 Capt. Reuben Chamberlin, 2d Regt. Infantry.

I have also appointed Lieut. Charles Stephens of the 3d Infty Assistant Inspector Genl. and leave him subject to your orders. The first of these Gentlemen I presume you are acquainted with, And the latter I reccommend to you as a modest well informed officer, and inferior to none of his age.

With the foregoing remarks I assign you the immediate command of this section of my District. That is to say from Pascagola to the Eastern limits of the same and as far North as the River Tennessee. Upon all matters not mentioned in this letter you will use your discretion, and take the steps in your opinion best calculated for the defence of the country committed to your protection, Keeping me always advised of every occurrence worthy of communication, and you will at any time receive from me any further instructions you may wish as I may have in my power to afford you.

I have the honor to be respectfully yr. obdt. Servt.